

BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED IN A CAMPING SITUATION

By

HARRY R. MEYERING, Ph.D.

Teachers College of Kansas City, Kansas City, Missouri

THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR
MENTAL HYGIENE, Inc.
50 West 50th Street
New York City
1937

The National Committee for Mental Hygiene

FOUNDED 1909

INCORPORATED 1916

50 WEST 50TH STREET, NEW YORK CITY

Honorary President

ADOLF MEYER, M.D.

Treasurer

HARRY P. ROBBINS

President

ARTHUR H. RUGGLES, M.D.

Executive Committee

AUGUSTUS S. KNIGHT, M.D., *Chairman*

HARRY P. ROBBINS

ARTHUR H. RUGGLES, M.D.

BERNARD SACHS, M.D.

ORLANDO B. WILLCOX

Vice-Presidents

JAMES R. ANGELL, LL.D.

WILLIAM L. RUSSELL, M.D.

BERNARD SACHS, M.D.

Scientific Administrative Committee

WILLIAM A. WHITE, M.D., *Chairman*

KARL M. BOWMAN, M.D.

CLARENCE O. CHENEY, M.D.

HAVEN EMERSON, M.D.

HERBERT E. HAWKES, PH.D.

J. ALLEN JACKSON, M.D.

AUGUSTUS S. KNIGHT, M.D.

PORTER R. LEE

WALTER R. MILES, PH.D.

WINFRED OVERHOLSER, M.D.

HOWARD W. POTTER, M.D.

HARRY P. ROBBINS

ARTHUR H. RUGGLES, M.D.

WILLIAM M. RUSSELL, M.D.

BERNARD SACHS, M.D.

EDWARD A. STRECKER, M.D.

WILLIAM B. TERHUNE, M.D.

WALTER L. TREADWAY, M.D.

ORLANDO B. WILLCOX

C. FRED WILLIAMS, M.D.

ROBERT S. WOODWORTH, PH.D.



Advisory Committee on Education

C. MACFIE CAMPBELL, M.D., *Chairman*

Advisory Committee on Psychiatric Education

ADOLF MEYER, M.D., *Chairman*

Advisory Committee on Hospital Service

FREDERICK W. PARSONS, M.D., *Chairman*

Advisory Committee on Statistics

HORATIO M. POLLOCK, *Chairman*

Executive Staff

CLARENCE M. HINCKS, M.D., *General Director*

CLIFFORD W. BEERS, *Secretary*

H. EDMUND BULLIS, *Executive Officer*

GEORGE S. STEVENSON, M.D., *Director, Division on Community Clinics*

SAMUEL W. HAMILTON, M.D., *Director, Division on Hospital Service*

FRANKLIN G. EBAUGH, M.D., *Director, Division of Psychiatric Education*

PAUL O. KOMORA, *Associate Secretary*

MARGARET H. WAGENHALS, *Assistant Editor*

GENERAL PURPOSES

The National Committee for Mental Hygiene, directly and through its affiliated state societies and local committees, works for the conservation of mental health; for the reduction and prevention of mental and nervous disorders and mental deficiency; for the improved care and treatment of those suffering from mental diseases; the special training and supervision of the feeble-minded; and the acquisition and dissemination of reliable information on these subjects and on mental factors involved in the problems of education, industry, delinquency, dependency, and others related to the broad field of human behavior. The Committee seeks to accomplish its purposes by stimulating research into the nature and causes of nervous and mental diseases and mental deficiency; conducting surveys and studies of mental-hygiene problems; applying the knowledge gained from such studies, through education and the promotion of beneficial legislation; encouraging psychiatric social work; establishing child-guidance and other mental-hygiene clinics; developing trained personnel in the fields of psychiatry and mental hygiene; and coöperating with governmental and unofficial agencies whose work touches at any point the field of mental hygiene.

BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED IN A CAMPING SITUATION *

HARRY R. MEYERING, PH.D.

Teachers College of Kansas City, Kansas City, Missouri

WHILE camping is a relatively recent movement in America, dating from about 1861, it is peculiar to American culture, being largely due to the persistence of pioneer and military traditions, the large areas of free land, and the looseness of family ties. Statistics show that there are from 3,485 to 5,000 organized camps in America, enrolling an estimated population of 3,000,000 or more persons per summer, and that the number is rapidly increasing.

A further study of the camping movement reveals the following facts of interest to educators: a six weeks' camping period is approximately equal, in number of hours, to the total time a child spends for an entire year in school; public schools are beginning to establish camps in connection with their school programs; and universities and clinics, realizing the opportunity to control the life situations of non-institutionalized individuals, are increasingly using the camp for the study of behavior disorders,¹ and have established over three hundred camps devoted to the care of atypical children.

The camp offers certain advantages over the school and the home in the study of boys' behavior problems. The boys are in a new environment which can be controlled to a considerable extent. The camp has supervision of the boy for the entire day, and there is apt to be more intimacy between the boy and his counselor than is found in many other situations.

While behavior consists of overt expressions and inward responses, and is a function of the situation as well as a release of energy set off by a stimulus, this study attempts to analyze only overt forms of undesirable behavior encoun-

* A summary of a dissertation completed at the University of Michigan under the direction of Professors William C. Trow, L. J. Carr, H. Y. McClusky, G. E. Meyers, and W. C. Olson.

¹ See, for example, *The Summer Camp as a Behavior Clinic*, by Robert L. Amsden. MENTAL HYGIENE, Vol. 20, pp. 262-68, April, 1936.

2 BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS IN A CAMPING SITUATION

tered in a camping situation. A behavior problem, as the term is used in this study, is any discrepancy between the way a child behaves and the demands of his environment that appeared serious enough for the counselor to record.

The purpose of the study was to discover (1) what kinds of behavior problem emerge in a camping situation in a group of children selected by their teachers as having problems in school, and (2) whether any relationships exist between these problems and age, intelligence, health, socio-economic status, emotional status, and problem-tendency scores. It was felt that while it is important to study the behavior of children who deviate to a marked extent from the normal, it is equally important to note the behavior in approximately the same situation of children who are described as being of average age, intelligence, emotional adjustment, and socio-economic background, and as having median problem-tendency scores, as determined by standardized measures.

The data used in the study were obtained from narrative daily records, written by camp counselors during an eight weeks' camping period, in the summer of 1935, describing the behavior problems of a group of 100 boys in camp, together with the office records concerning these same boys gathered by the Ann Arbor Boys' Guidance Bureau. The data contain information as to the nature of the camp and of the group, including the age, grade placement, intelligence quotient, race, health condition, socio-economic status, emotional status, and problem-tendency scores of each member of the group.

The camp in which the experiment was carried on was known in 1935 as the University of Michigan Camp for Boys. It was well equipped and was administered by university-trained men. It provided a well-rounded program of camp crafts and required that each boy work on an average of three hours a day. The cost per boy per week was eight dollars and fifty cents, and the charge to the boy was dependent upon the parents' ability to pay.

The boys participating in the program were selected by teachers and social workers on the basis of physical, economic, social, and emotional needs and in accordance with certain regulations laid down by the camp committee.

The range of ages of these boys was from nine years, one month, to fifteen years, eleven months, the average age being

eleven years, two months. Fifty-five per cent of the group had lived 90 per cent or more of their lives in Ann Arbor. Ninety-five per cent of the boys were reported living with their parents. One-half of the group were in the fifth and sixth grades, the range of grade placement extending from grade 2B to grade 9A. One-third of the group were average according to the normal age-grade placement of the Ann Arbor Schools. The median intelligence quotient for the group was 90, as determined by an intelligence test that was administered in camp. Only one member of the group was a Negro. Fifty-eight of the boys had no vaccination scars, 17 had genital defects and 36 eye trouble, and 37 were under-nourished.

The median Sims' socio-economic score for the group was 13, which was 3.5 points below the norm for Ann Arbor homes as determined by administering the questionnaire to a sample of 870 Ann Arbor families.

The median score for the group on the Woodworth-Mathews personal-data sheet was 11.5. The mean score of 807 unselected boys in Ann Arbor was 10.4. Only 15 per cent of the group were thought to have significantly high scores. The items on which the camp group differed by more than 100 per cent from an unselected group, together with the percentage differences were: "Ran away from home"—225 per cent; "Felt like running away from home"—115 per cent; "Feels as if family didn't treat him right"—500 per cent; "Does not usually feel well and strong"—100 per cent; "Does not usually sleep well"—140 per cent; "Has idea that he is an adopted child"—133 per cent.

The median score of the group on Schedule B of the Haggerty-Olson-Wickman behavior-rating scale was 79.8 when rated by the teachers and 74.5 when rated by campus counselors. The mean score of 437 boys tested by the Ann Arbor Boys' Guidance Bureau was 75.9. On Schedule A of the same scale the median score for the group was 27.4 when rated by the teachers and 33.1 when rated by camp counselors. The mean score of 434 Ann Arbor boys was 24.1.

The method of studying the counselors' behavior-record logs included a review of previous studies in order to formulate (1) the purpose of making such a study—namely, "to know what undesirable problems arise in a camping situation,

4 BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS IN A CAMPING SITUATION

so that eventually behavior may be predicted under similar conditions"; (2) a satisfactory definition of an undesirable behavior problem, the one used being Olson's definition of a behavior problem as "a discrepancy between the capacities of an individual to adjust himself and the demands of his environment"; and (3) a method of codifying narrative records. An adaptation of the method developed by Blatz and Bott was employed to show the kinds of problem experienced by each boy and the time at which they appeared.

Sample quotations from the records, which show how different problems are described by the counselors, are presented below.

Indifference: "July 26—Allan did not care about helping on cabin clean-up. He said, 'Aw, I hope we get less than zero on our rating.'"

H.H.

Defiance of Discipline: "August 15—He still hasn't gotten a haircut, despite frequent orders and the willingness of Mrs. Alder to do it free."

M.B.

Bullying: "July 24—Twice to-day he has gone out of his way to knock over games small boys were playing."

H.H.

Unpopularity with children: "August 17—He was twice turned down by groups of three boys when he asked to accompany them on boat rides."

Infantile behavior: "July 24—When I was lying on my bunk and the boys were on theirs, he walked up to me and kissed me several times. The other boys sneered at him and he said he was trying 'to get in good.'"

H.H.

Withdrawing: "July 14—John often seems to be almost in a daze. At meals to-day he had to be spoken to about three times before it would dawn on him that he was spoken to. This is not unusual for him."

M.B.

Homesickness: "August 11—When his mother came, Harry wanted to go home. He cried and begged, but his mother wouldn't take him."

H.H.

Disturbing: "July 8—Persisted in disturbing during the quiet hour and finally cried when C. slapped his pants."

Miscellaneous: "August 1—On the hike, we saw a water snake. He asked if he could catch it and I replied yes. He chased it into the water, making several dives for it. He finally got it around the middle, the snake biting him six times on the hand. He appeared not to care, but was very proud of the capture. Told me later he was afraid of snakes."

H.H.

Temper tantrums: "August 14—Was playing ping-pong to-day during cabin-activity period. When I saw him and sent him with the rest of the boys, he lost his temper, threw down the paddle, and stomped off."
H.H.

Truancy: "August 23—Glen was one of the three that went fishing to-day instead of helping with the clean-up."

Enuresis: "July 12—To-day while walking along with Walter, I asked him if he sometimes wet his bedding—having suspected him. He answered that he did not. I then asked him about wetting his clothing. He answered that he did. When I asked him why, he said that the J.B. (toilet) was too far, especially when he needed to go real badly."

Lying: "August 4—Splashed water on several boys during a boat trip. He swore that it was accidental, but I caught him deliberately doing it."
M.B.

Selfishness: "July 15—Parents came out and brought a great deal of candy. He didn't share it with any one except C."
M.B.

Unnecessary tardiness: "July 8—Allan was the last one [down to exercise]. He took his spank good-naturedly. He realized he had it coming."

Stealing: "July 30—To-day Wes was accused of stealing a pair of socks belonging to Tom. Said he found them in wastebasket. . . . When Tom claimed them, Wes returned them. This P.M. another pair of stockings not belonging to Wes was found in his bag. 'I never knew they were there,' was his reply to questioning. Sheepishly he returned them."

Carelessness: "August 18—Ross's mother came to-day and discovered that about one-fourth of his clothes were missing. This is a usual week-end happening. His clothes are usually strung all over the cabin."
H.H.

The records of which the preceding paragraphs are quotations were read so that categories or classifications could be made, and then were reread twice to secure a frequency count of the classifications. It was felt that reading the records twice would lead to the elimination of some of the subjective factors in the evaluation.

The total number of undesirable behavior problems that were recorded of 100 boys during a fifty-three-day camping period was 1,370. The range of problems per boy was from none to 38.

The incidence and percentage of behavior problems recorded is given in the following table:

6 BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS IN A CAMPING SITUATION

INCIDENCE AND PERCENTAGE OF BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS OF 100 BOYS IN CAMP,
REPORTED BY COUNSELORS, SUMMER 1935

<i>Type of problem</i>	<i>Times reported.</i>	<i>Percentage of total number of problems</i>
Indifference.	180	13.14
Defiance of discipline.	170	12.41
Bullying.	149	10.88
Unpopularity with children.	124	9.06
Infantile behavior.	85	6.20
Withdrawing.	71	5.18
Homesickness.	69	5.04
Disturbing.	67	4.89
Carelessness.	61	4.45
Miscellaneous.	60	4.38
Temper tantrums.	58	4.24
Truancy.	50	3.65
Enuresis.	42	3.07
Lying.	41	2.99
Selfishness.	40	2.92
Unnecessary tardiness.	28	2.04
Imaginative lying.	23	1.68
Stealing.	22	1.61
Obscene notes.	12	0.88
Marked overactivity.	10	0.73
Cheating.	5	0.37
Sex offenses.	2	0.15
Speech difficulties.	1	0.07
Total.	1,370	100.00

The problems of infantile behavior, withdrawing, homesickness, disturbing, carelessness, enuresis, and selfishness are additional to the list of problems Olson found to be most frequent in a group of children in schoolroom situations, or are peculiar to a camp situation. It would, therefore, seem that it is in dealing with these problems that the camp could make distinct contributions to the problem of studying and treating behavior problems. The comparatively large percentage of problems of indifference suggests that the camp may have been too highly organized, with not enough time allowed for the individual to follow his own interests. It may be that a child's interest in camping is somewhat similar to that of many adults, who go to camp to rest or to follow an informal program.

A graph of the number of problems that occurred each day showed (1) considerable fluctuation from day to day; (2) a

higher percentage of problems during the first two weeks of the camp period; and (3) a higher percentage of problems occurring on Sundays than on week days. A distribution of the number of problems that occurred each day gives a mean score of 24.7 per day. A study of the days when there were more or fewer problems than average recorded failed to show that the number of cases was related to such factors as temperature or the amount of rainfall. The fact that more problems occurred on Sundays and at the beginning of the camp period suggests that camp directors may well spend additional efforts in aiding the boy to become adjusted to the camp at the beginning of his stay and to the visiting program of the camp.

A study of the relationships of the total number of problems and of each kind of problem recorded in camp to age, intelligence, health, socio-economic status, personality adjustment, and problem-tendency scores was believed to be of value if it would help answer the following questions: (1) who should go to a certain type of camp (*e.g.*, a camp that claims to do delinquency-prevention work should know what kind of group is apt to have the most problems to begin with) and (2) what curriculum changes a camp should make (*e.g.*, if there is a considerable percentage of children who have problems of overactivity, should a camp modify its athletic program, and so on?)

The method used to find the relationships included the recording of each kind of problem of each boy; the transferring of this information and supplementary information as to the boy's age, intelligence, and so forth, to individual punched cards; and a sorting of the cards to find a total of 822 relationships, as, for example, what percentage of nine-year-old boys who went to camp had problems of homesickness; what percentage of boys who had a high socio-economic status experienced problems of enuresis; and so forth.

The following are a few of the interesting relationships found in the study:

Homesickness and infantile behavior appeared more frequently in the younger groups, and tardiness and temper tantrums in the older groups, while indifference, unpopularity with other children, and lying were found to be common to both the younger and older groups.

In the low-intelligence group (I.Q. 60 to 79) problems of indifference, defiance of discipline, unpopularity with other children, infantile behavior, homesickness, temper tantrums, truancy, lying, selfishness, and sex offenses were more prevalent than among the bright group (I.Q. 110 to 129). Bullying, enuresis, overactivity, and cheating showed no relation to intelligence score. Unnecessary tardiness was more prevalent in the bright group.

Boys with a physical rating of "poor" had more recorded behavior problems of indifference, unpopularity with children, infantile behavior, homesickness, temper tantrums, truancy, enuresis, selfishness, tardiness, and overactivity. Their more robust companions were more frequently recorded as being bullies, disturbers, careless, and defiant of discipline.

The boys coming from the poorest homes, as determined by the use of Sims' score card for socio-economic status, had more problems of imaginative lying, overactivity, cheating, and sex offenses. The boys from slightly below average homes had more problems of indifference, bullying, unpopularity, infantile behavior, withdrawing, homesickness, temper tantrums, enuresis, lying, selfishness, stealing, and obscenity—in short, they had by far a greater variety of problems than any other group. Truancy was most prevalent among boys from the best homes.

In the group with higher (more undesirable) scores in schoolroom situations, as marked by their teachers on Schedule A of the Haggerty-Olson-Wickman behavior-rating scale, a larger percentage had experienced all the various kinds of problem recorded in camp than in the group with lower than average scores. Similar results were obtained with Schedule B of this scale, although tardiness was more prevalent in the group with the lower (more favorable) scores.

The recording and the analyzing of the behavior problems of a particular camp group are of comparatively little value in predicting the number and kinds of behavior problems that are likely to occur in other camp groups. It is believed, however, that a careful study of the individual camper's undesirable overt actions is a necessary step in understanding the adjustments that an ever-increasing army of children are called upon to make each summer.

MENTAL HYGIENE

QUARTERLY MAGAZINE OF

THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR MENTAL HYGIENE, INC.

PUBLICATION OFFICE:

372-374 BROADWAY, ALBANY, N. Y.

EDITORIAL OFFICE:

50 WEST 50TH STREET, NEW YORK CITY

CLARENCE M. HINCKS, M.D., *Editor*

MARGARET H. WAGENHALS, *Assistant Editor*

EDITORIAL BOARD

HOWARD W. POTTER, M.D.

EDWARD A. STRECKER, M.D.

SHELDON GLUECK

HORATIO M. POLLOCK

October, 1937

INDEX

Vol. 21, No. 4

Psychological Factors in Alcoholism.....	Walter R. Miles	529
The Problem of Frequent Replacement of the Young Dependent Child.....	Florence Clothier	549
Mental-Hygiene Services for Colleges and Universities.....	Theophile Raphael	559
The Rôle of the Psychiatric Hospital.....	George S. Sprague	569
Diagnostic Methods in Child Guidance and Psychological Counseling.....	Anni B. Weiss	579
Social Case-Work in Prisons.....	Nathaniel Cantor	599
Mental-Hygiene Implications of Non-Attendance.....	Edward E. Harkavy	608
Convalescence.	Edward Liss	619
Behavior Problems Encountered in a Camping Situation.....	Harry A. Meyering	623
Psychological Problems in Stuttering.....	Bryng Bryngelson	631
Book Reviews:		
The Mentally Ill in America. By Albert Deutsch.....	William L. Russell	640
Treatment in Psychiatry. By Oskar Diethelm.....	Harold F. Corson	644
An Introduction to Psychological Medicine. By R. G. Gordon, N. G. Harris, and J. R. Rees.....	A. T. Mathers	648
American Medicine—Expert Testimony Out of Court.....	Andrew H. Woods	649
The Exploration of the Inner World. By Anton T. Boisen.....	Karl M. Bowman	654
A Study of One Hundred Cases From the Presbyterian Hospital in the City of New York. By Janet Thornton and Marjorie Strauss Knauth.	Bertha C. Lovell	655
Eugenical Sterilization; A Reorientation of the Problem. By the Committee of the American Neurological Association for the Investigation of Eugenical Sterilization.....	C. B. Davenport	659
Human Genetics and Its Social Import. By S. J. Holmes.....	F. H. Hankins	661
Character and Citizenship Training in the Public Schools; An Experimental Study of Three Methods. By Vernon Jones.....	Goodwin Watson	662
A Mind Restored; The Story of Jim Curran. By Elsa Krauch.....	Arthur H. Harrington	664
A Mind Mislaid. By Henry Collins Brown.....	John E. Lind	666
The Outward Room. By Millen Brand.....	Louis J. Bragman	667
The Book of Festivals. By D. G. Spicer.....	Paul O. Komora	669
Notes and Comments.....	Paul O. Komora	671
Current Bibliography.....	Eva R. Hawkins	696

MENTAL HYGIENE aims to bring dependable information to every one whose interest or whose work brings him into contact with mental problems. Writers of authority present original communications and reviews of important books; noteworthy articles in periodicals out of convenient reach of the general public are published; reports of surveys, special investigations, and new methods of prevention or treatment in the broad field of mental hygiene and psychopathology are presented and discussed in as non-technical a way as possible. It is our aim to make MENTAL HYGIENE indispensable to all thoughtful readers. Physicians, lawyers, educators, clergymen, public officials and students of social problems will find the magazine of especial interest.

The National Committee for Mental Hygiene does not necessarily endorse or assume responsibility for opinions expressed or statements made. Articles presented are printed upon the authority of their writers. The reviewing of a book does not imply its recommendation by The National Committee for Mental Hygiene. Though all articles in this magazine are copyrighted, others may quote them freely provided appropriate credit be given to MENTAL HYGIENE.

Subscription: Three dollars a year; seventy-five cents a single copy. Publication Office: 372-374 BROADWAY, ALBANY, N. Y. Correspondence should be addressed and checks made payable to "Mental Hygiene," 372-374 Broadway, Albany, N. Y., or The National Committee for Mental Hygiene, Inc., 50 West 50th Street, New York City.

Copyright, 1937, by The National Committee for Mental Hygiene, Inc.

PARENT-TEACHER PACKETS*

No. 1. MENTAL HYGIENE LITERATURE FOR BEGINNERS

- Your Mind and You. By George K. Pratt, M.D.
- Are We Helping or Hindering Our Children? By George S. Stevenson, M.D.
- Mental Hygiene Problems of Normal Adolescence. By Jessie Taft, Ph.D.
- Mental Hygiene of Childhood. By William A. White, M.D.
- Mental Hygiene and the Parasite. By Margaret J. Hamilton.
- Practical Aspects of Parental Love. By Esther L. Richards, M.D.
- Personality Deviations and Their Relation to the Home. By Sybil Foster.
- Some Undesirable Habits and Suggestions as to Treatment. By Jessie Taft, Ph.D.
- Points on Child Behavior. By Lawson G. Lowrey, M.D.
- Habit Training for Children. By Douglas A. Thom, M.D.
-

No. 2. MENTAL HYGIENE FOR ADVANCED READERS

- Mental Adaptations. By Frederick Lyman Wells.
- The Relation of the School to the Mental Health of the Average Child. By Jessie Taft, Ph.D.
- Changing the Child's Behavior. By Phyllis Blanchard, Ph.D., and Richard Paynter, Jr., Ph.D.
- Mental Health in Childhood. By Marion E. Kenworthy, M.D.
- Revising Our Attitude Toward Sex. By E. Van Norman Emery, M.D.
- Competitions and the Conflict Over Difference. By Lawson G. Lowrey.
- Individual Variations in Mental Equipment. By Augusta F. Bronner, Ph.D.
- Some of the Psychological Mechanisms of Human Conduct. By Irving J. Sands, M.D., and Phyllis Blanchard, Ph.D.
- Mental Hygiene and the College Student. By Frankwood E. Williams, M.D.
- The Application of Psychiatry to High-School Problems. By Anne T. Bingham, M.D.

* These packets may be secured at the price of \$1.00 each from The National Committee for Mental Hygiene, 50 West 50th Street, New York City. Write also for a complete list of publications.